



Aalto University
Language Centre

Aaltonaut Communication Skills

Academic Writing 1

Teacher: Matthew Billington

What is “good” Academic Writing?

Individual Task

Write down your ideas on the sticky notes.

— One idea per sticky note!

What is “good” Academic Writing?

Groups of 3

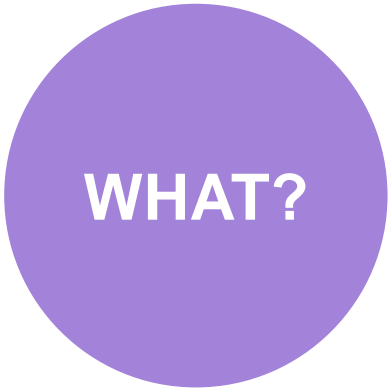
- Share your ideas with your group.
- Decide which ideas are related to each other. Organize the notes into categories.
- Name the categories.

Make a poster summarizing your group’s ideas, be prepared to present your ideas to the others.

What is “good” Academic Writing?

1. **Objectivity**
2. **Complexity:** lexically and grammatically more complex
3. **Formality**
4. **Precision with facts & figures**
5. **Explicitness:** signposting / linking ideas
6. **Accuracy:** narrow specific terminology
7. **Hedging:** cautious language indicating a degree of certainty
8. **Responsibility:** support claims with evidence, use sources, critically assess sources

(Gillet, 2015)





Audience



WHY?

Who is the text for?

e.g. Professor, Journal editor, Public, Employer...



WHAT?



Audience



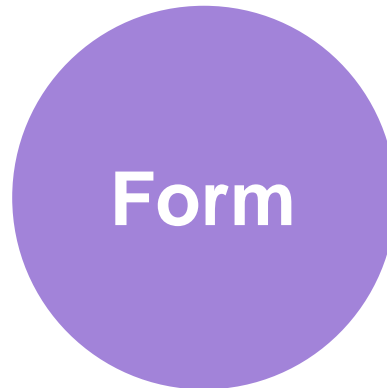
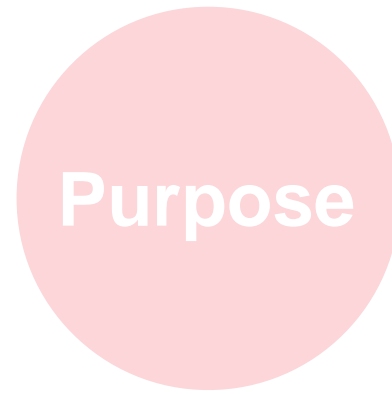
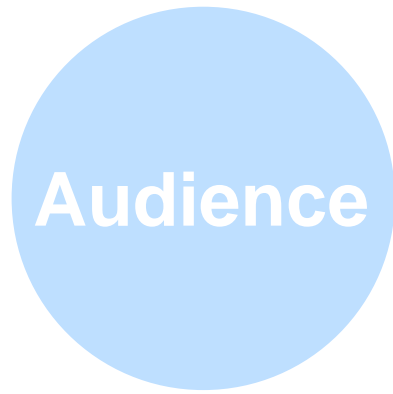
Purpose

Why write the text?

e.g. to inform, to persuade, to argue, to describe, etc.



WHAT?



GENRE & STYLE

**e.g. formal versus informal style, vocabulary choice,
order of information, level of detail, etc.**

Genres

- 1. What are they? Think of music, film, novels, etc.**
- 2. What would be some examples of genres in writing?**
- 3. How do academic writing genres differ from other writing genres?**
- 4. What do you think is included in a project report?**

Formal versus Informal

Pair work

Read through the two texts.

Try to formulate rules about formality based on the two texts.

Share your ideas with the group.



England 1066 AD

Formality – Verbs

Anglo-Saxon/ less formal verbs Latinate/ more formal verbs

- **Be**
 - Do
 - Get
 - Give
 - Be going to
 - Happen
 - Have
 - Have to
 - Mean
 - Put
 - Use
 - Make up
- Be situated, be listed, serve as
 - Perform, implement, execute
 - Become, acquire, procure
 - Provide, supply, contribute
 - Will
 - Occur
 - Possess, include, contain
 - Should, must
 - Denote, indicate
 - Place, attach, insert
 - Employ, utilize, apply, exploit
 - Constitute, comprise
- (McAnsh & Pennington, 2005)

Formality – Nouns

Informal

- a thing
- know-how
- trouble
- an idea
- the meaning (of)

Formal

- a device, object, instrument, issue, factor
- expertise
- difficulty, challenge
- a concept, plan, notion
- the purpose, aim, objective, target

Formality – Adjectives

Informal

- good
- bad
- small, tiny
- big
- different

Formal

- suitable, effective, beneficial, apt
- poor, ineffective, unsuitable
- minute, insignificant
- major, high, large, great
- various, a variety of, separate

Thesaurus

design



[see definition of design](#)



show

all



noun **sketch, draft**

noun **artful conception**

noun **intention**

verb **plan, outline**

verb **create, conceive**

[Colourful crutches](#)

www.coolcrutches.com/

lightweight, comfortable, quiet, coloured crutches

Ad

Relevance



A-Z

Complexity



+

Length



+

Synonyms for design



Common



Informal



noun **sketch, draft**

architecture

layout

scheme

delineation

outline

arrangement

map

study

depiction

paste-up

composition

method

blueprint

diagram

perspective

construction

model

chart

doodle

tracery

drawing

pattern

comp

dummy

tracing

form

picture

conception

formation

treatment

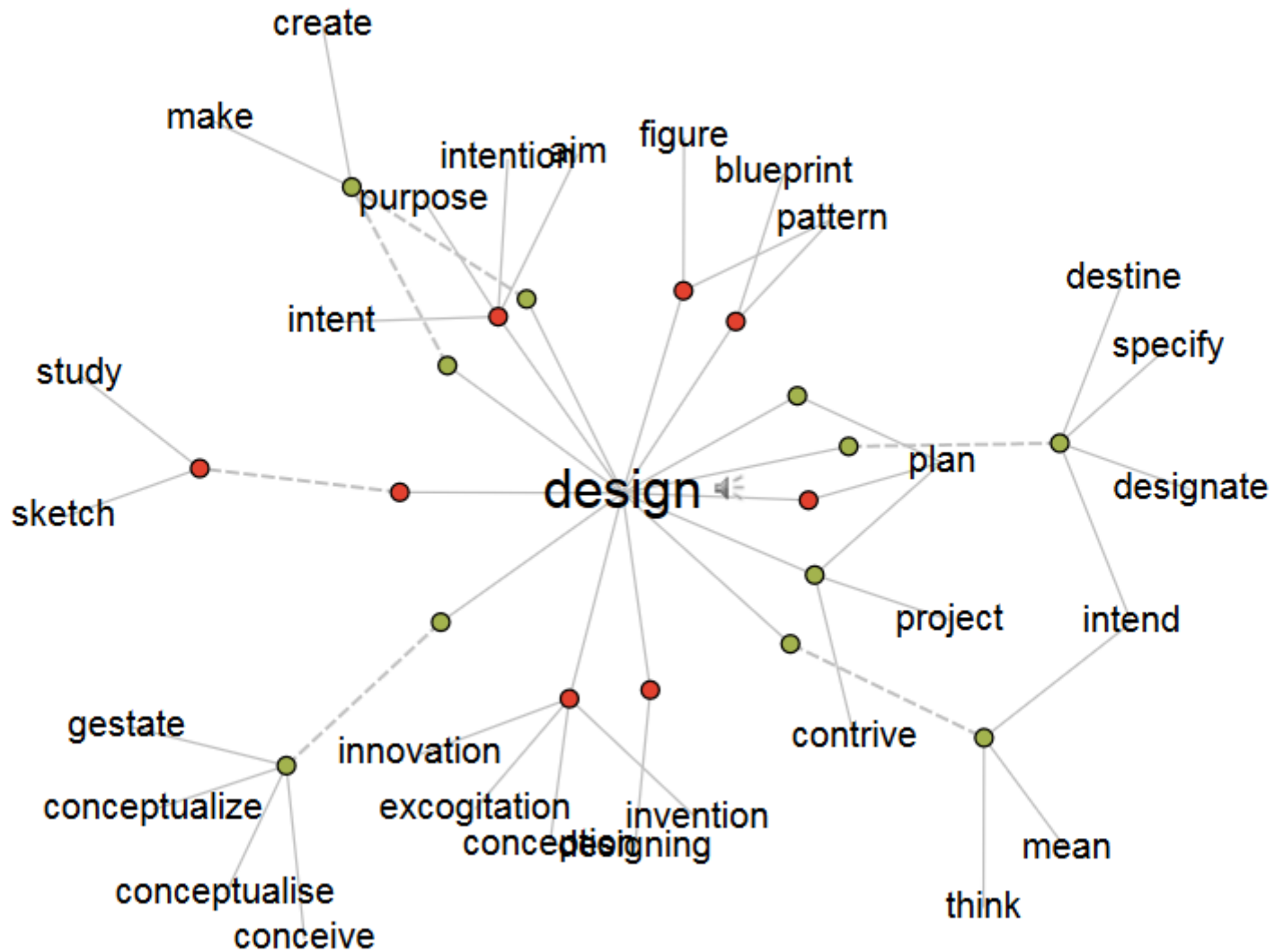
idea

plan

constitution

makeup

Visual Thesaurus



[Introducing Work](#)

[Referring to Sources](#)

[Describing Methods](#)

[Reporting Results](#)

[Discussing Findings](#)

[HOME](#) »

Compare and Contrast

GENERAL LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

[Being Critical](#)

[Being Cautious](#)

[Classifying and Listing](#)

[Compare and Contrast](#)

[Defining Terms](#)

[Describing Trends](#)

[Describing Quantities](#)

[Explaining Causality](#)

[Giving Examples](#)

[Signalling Transition](#)

[Writing about the Past](#)

By understanding similarities and differences between two things, we can increase our understanding and learn more about both. This usually involves a process of analysis where we compare the specific parts as well as the whole. Comparison may also be a part of evaluation. For example, by comparing specific aspects of A and B, we can determine which is more useful or valuable. Many paragraphs whose function is to compare or contrast begin with an introductory sentence expressed in general terms.

Introductory Sentences: Differences

X is different from Y in a number of respects.

X differs from Y in a number of important ways.

There are a number of important differences between X and Y.

Women and men differ not only in physical attributes but also in the way in which

Smith (2003)

found
observed

distinct
significant
notable
considerable
major
only slight

differences between X

Formality

Informal

- Contractions OK
 - e.g. won't, it's
- Sentences vary, often less complex
- Colloquial words in moderation
- Idioms in moderation

Formal

- No contractions
 - e.g. will not, it is
- Full sentences with greater complexity
- Avoid colloquial words
 - e.g. stuff, thing, good, lots of, etc.
- Avoid idioms
 - e.g. pain in the neck

Active versus Passive Voice

Active – Subject performs the action of the verb

I used this machine to make espresso coffee.

Passive – Subject receives the action of the verb

The machine was used (by me) to make espresso coffee.

Which did you use? Why?

Avoid personal pronouns

I propose a new solution for recycling plastic...

Use the inanimate agent

This thesis proposes a new solution for recycling plastic...

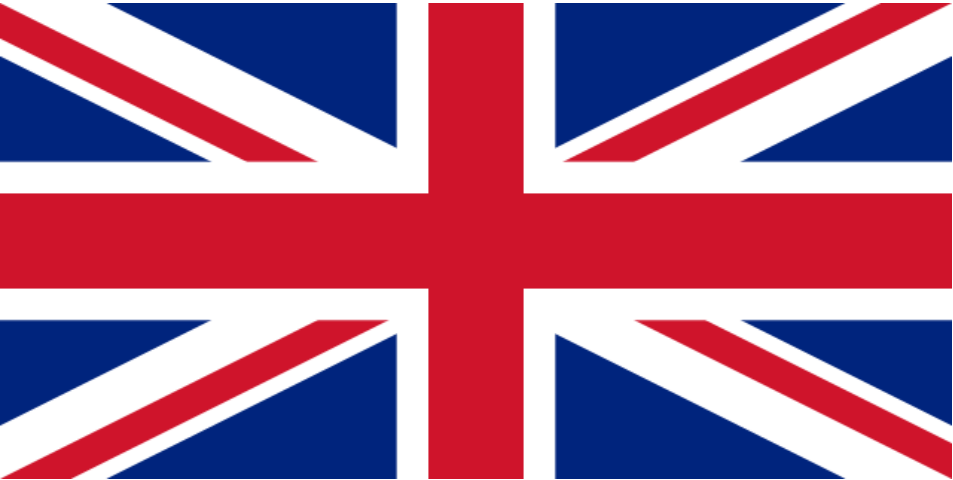
This thesis analyzes...

This paper argues...

This report discovered...

This article researched...

Which dialect to use?



Common English Dialectal Differences

What other differences can you think of?

British English

Programme

Autumn

Honour

Metre

Aluminium

Analyse

Analogue

Lift

Cancelled

Dr

American English

Program

Fall

Honor

Meter

Aluminum

Analyze

Analog

Elevator

Canceled

Dr.

Verb tense – Present simple

The data **suggest**...

There **is** evidence that...

Uses:

To introduce your work

To make general statements, conclusions, or interpretations about research

To introduce evidence or support

Verb tense – Past Simple

Swales (2002) **found**...

A paired samples t-test **was run**...

Uses:

To introduce others' research work

To describe methods and data in your work

Peer feedback

Pair work

Based on the rules we just discussed, read your partner's text.

Provide feedback on how to make their writing more formal.

Homework

- Rewrite the paper in academic formal style
- Submit to MyCourses by 08.03.2019
- You will receive comments from me after your submission.

Remember to format your references correctly! Examples:

APA

In-text citation: (Jones, 1998, p. 199)

Reference List: Jones, A. (1998). How to be happy. *Journal of Applied Happiness, Vol 2*. Retrieved from [https://www.bliss.com/how to be happy](https://www.bliss.com/how-to-be-happy)

IEEE

In text: [4]

Reference list:

[4] A, Jones, “How to be happy,” *J. App. Happ.*, vol. 2. Jan 1998.

Accessed on: Feb 10, 2019. [Online]. [https://www.bliss.com/how to be happy](https://www.bliss.com/how-to-be-happy)

Formal vocabulary game

Groups of three

Provide clues to help your opponents finish the crossword.